

TOWN OF HARPSWELL
COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting of February 4, 2010
Approved Minutes

Committee Members Present: David I. Chipman
 Alan M. Shaver
 C.V. Noyes

Guest: Jay Somers, Senior Manager
 Government & Community Relations
 Comcast Cable

Town Staff Present: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator (arrived later)
 Melissa Moretti, Recording Secretary

The meeting opened at 3:05 PM at the Harpswell Town Office, 263 Mountain Road, Harpswell, Maine.

The Recording Secretary gave members of the Committee copies of:

- Approved Minutes of June 18, 2009
- Approved Minutes of November 20, 2009
- Draft Minutes of January 7, 2010

Mr. Chipman opened the meeting, and it was noted that Ms. Eiane was in another meeting and would arrive late.

There was discussion regarding whether Comcast could provide the Town with an “address only” list of Harpswell subscribers for purposes of electronic overlay on a map, such as “Google.” Mr. Somers said he didn’t think so due to the issue of confidentiality, but he would ask.

Mr. Somers addressed previously discussed items individually:

- 1) Mr. Somers said the franchise fee would remain at five percent (5%); he wanted Ms. Eiane to respond.
- 2) The matter of access capital was addressed, which would be \$60,000 to include \$40,000 up front, and \$20,000 at the beginning of the fifth year, to amortize over a period of six years.
- 3) Mr. Somers said he could not accept the proposed language regarding the trial period. He suggested that the Board of Selectmen discuss the matter of technology with the Town during the second year; he would put the desired wording in a side agreement.
- 4) Mr. Somers said the Route 24 extension would be done. He would get the Town a schedule, and [the cost] would “pass through to the subscriber.” Total cost was estimated to be around \$6,200 over a period of ten years; only four to six homes would be affected.
- 5) It was clarified that the renewal license would be for ten years, and would include two

access channels. Mr. Chipman said no stereo audio was necessary on Channel 3 (the second channel).

6) There was discussion regarding the sites (three fire departments and the Town Office, including the Recycling Center) that would be covered by the technical grant which would be \$3,000/yr. for internet service. Mr. Somers said he would work with the Town of Brunswick regarding the school sites.

7) Mr. Chipman expressed interest in having increased speed for the internet service at the Harpswell Community Television ("HCTV") station. Mr. Somers he would look into it and could put the matter in either (a) the franchise agreement, or (b) a side agreement for Ms. Eiane to approve.

8) Mr. Somers said that Comcast wanted a signed agreement within sixty (60) days; the Town responded that an agreement should be signed by April 1, 2010.

9) There was further discussion regarding dedicated fiber optic cable to Harpswell schools, since they were a part of [school district] SAD75.

10) Mr. Chipman referred to the existing language of the agreement, and said there were nine locations in Harpswell for "live return." Mr. Somers said the Town should be specific about what they wanted. Mr. Chipman read from the existing agreement "Comcast will continue to maintain... There was discussion; Mr. Somers said to leave the wording in the agreement.

11) Mr. Chipman said he wanted "fast, free internet" for HCTV, and stated the information that "Comcast was going digital" in six months, or so. Mr. Somers said he would check in to the matter of the internet at HCTV. He also said the matter could be addressed by a side agreement, since HCTV was not part of the Town Office. [There was discussion regarding over lashed cable from HCTV to Bob Ingersoll's house, from the "Frontier Cable days."]

12) Mr. Somers confirmed with Ms. Eiane that the Town would continue to receive payments from Comcast twice a year, on January 1 and June 30. It was explained that the money went to the Town and was then reappropriated, i.e. to HCTV.

13) The matter of the PEG agreement was discussed, and it was reiterated that the first payment would be 90 days after signing the agreement, \$40,000 would go to the Town and \$20,000 would be paid at the beginning of the fifth year.

14) The matter of a warrant article was discussed.

15) Regarding the "local wrap," Mr. Chipman said he would meet with the local Comcast technician and a note could be added to Comcast's file. Mr. Somers said he would look into it after the agreement was signed.

16) Ms. Eiane mentioned a newspaper article she had read in the Brunswick *Times Record* regarding changes to Comcast service (internet speed) in the Bowdoin and Bowdoinham schools. She informed Mr. Somers that Harpswell was also in SAD75. There was discussion.

17) Mr. Somers referred to Pg. 32, Sec. 27 of the existing agreement with regard to extension of service for local subscribers. Mr. Chipman said he would not push for Sage Rd. Mr. Somers reiterated that subscribers on Route 24 (Stevens Corner and Hamilton Place) would be included.

18) Mr. Somers said he would include the topics as discussed into the agreement and put two issues in a side agreement. He would send the proposed changes to Ms. Eiane, the Committee would meet to discuss them, and he would then provide a “clean” copy that the Town could take before the community at a public hearing.

There was further discussion regarding the matter of the PEG channels language. The combined cost would work out to be approx. \$.32/mo. after four years.

Ms. Eiane said she would pull the ordinance with regard to holding a public hearing, and would prepare a press release. It was decided that the public hearing would address only the franchise agreement, not any side agreement(s).

The issue of an overlay map was again addressed. Mr. Somers said he would provide an updated, detailed map of Harpswell that showed where there was no Comcast cable run, and in the future, it could be added to. The Committee wondered whether the Planning Dept. of the Town Office could provide Comcast with a map.

It was decided that the objective was to have a signed agreement by April 1, 2010. The next meeting would be scheduled after Mr. Somers responded to Ms. Eiane by e-mail with the changes discussed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Moretti
Recording Secretary